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ABSTRACT

This report analyzes three aspects of social studies education in Japan: (1) characteristics of secondary education before World War II, (2) the nature and effects of United States intervention in secondary social studies in 1946, and (3) features of contemporary social studies. Before 1945 the boys' middle school, the Chugakko, was the most prestigious; attendance was mandatory for admission to postsecondary education and thus to positions in government, business, and the military. Early in 1945 the major emphasis in secondary education was on training pupils in the moral principles of the empire and on military training. In 1946 a United States Education Mission called for decentralization of educational decision making, adoption of American democratic practices in the schools, abolition of special courses on morals, and the rewriting of Japanese history and geography. The objective was to promote democratic Japanese education within a world society committed to non-aggression and peace. In 1947 a secondary social studies program was developed which followed the recommendations of the U.S. Education Mission, but in the late 1950s the country began a swing back to traditional curricula. However, a Study of Modern Society course was included at the secondary level. The author concludes that because of the language barrier in translating guidelines into results, the United States' influence on Japanese social studies was less than expected. (Author/KC)

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AMERICAN SOCIAL STUDIES IN JAPAN: SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE SOCIAL STUDIES REFORMS IMPOSED ON THE JAPANESE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AFTER WORLD WAR TWO.

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AMERICAN SOCIAL STUDIES IN JAPAN

Some observations on the Social Studies reforms imposed on the Japanese educational system after World War Two

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There have been two very powerful determinants of Canadian Social Studies Education - the influence of the United States and the decentralized national system. The sharp differences now evident, say between social studies in Alberta and Ontario, to a substantial degree are effects of these two determinants.

Recent experience in Japan presents an interesting and illuminating commentary on these aspects of the Canadian educational scene. Following World War Two United States military and civil authorities imposed a type of social studies on Japan's national system of education, totally replacing the traditional curriculum in that field. At the same time severe decentralization measures were introduced.

With assistance from the Canada Council and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science I was able to investigate the immediate and the longer term effects of these changes. My main sources of information were the personnel and libraries of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, the Japan Foundation, and the National Institute for Educational Research.

I am indebted to the following people for their helpfulness, courtesy, and resourcefulness in coping with an inquisitive researcher who had to cover a lot of ground in a short time: Dr. Yoshiya Abe, Exchange Persons Division, JSPS; Dr. Isao Amagi, Director, JSPS; Mr. Suzuki Ichiro, Director of Publications, Japan Foundation; Mr. Moeser, Academic Liaison Officer, Canadian Embassy; Dr. Richard Farnsworth, University of California, formerly Director of Educational Administration for the U.S. Occupation authorities in Japan; Dr. Koji Kato, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, NIER; Dr. Yasushi Mizoue, Division of Curriculum, Ministry of Education; Dr. Hiroshi Kida, Director, NIER. Last, and by far the one to whom I am most indebted, Dr. Rentaro Ohno, Director of Planning, NIER. I look forward to his forthcoming book on the history of social studies education in Japan and trust that it, along with other valuable Japanese publications which I was privileged to preview with the aid of an interpreter, will shortly be available in English.

This report touches on the following areas, then summarizes my findings in several conclusions and one major recommendation: Features of pre-1945 secondary education; Nature of the U.S. Intervention in secondary social studies; Effects of the Intervention; Features of contemporary social studies.

FEATURES OF PRE-1945 SECONDARY EDUCATION

The most prestigious of the post-elementary schools was the chugakko, the Middle School, for boys only. It enrolled one out of every eight boys at that age level but its influence extended much farther than the numbers would suggest.

School attendance was not compulsory beyond the elementary level yet competition in the Chugakko entrance examinations was intense. Its five year program was an absolute requirement for admission to post-secondary education and thus to all the important positions in business, government, and the military.

At the beginning of the 1945 U.S. Army Occupation, secondary school curricula were based firmly on the Imperial regulations affecting the different types of secondary schools. Paramount place among all their activities was that of training pupils in the moral principles of the Empire.[1]

The specific aims listed for all secondary schools were: (1) To bring about a clear understanding of the mission of the Empire in East Asia and the world; (2) to develop in pupils a consciousness of their duties as subjects of the Empire; (3) to foster and cultivate pupils' convictions and executive power to support and maintain the prosperity of the Imperial Throne; (4) to train the minds and bodies of pupils by translating learning into action, with a view to cultivating virtues and judgment; to foster their creative abilities on the basis of knowledge and the practical application of their learning; and to drill the pupils so that they might acquire "indefatigable physical stamina" and "spiritual power"; (5) to promote the mental habit of acquiring literacy and military accomplishments and to raise the general tone by being simple and sturdy (gentle and faithful, in the case of girls), and by holding mutual cooperation and labor service in esteem; (6) to carry out education pertaining to the practical matters of national life, and at the same time to foster an attitude of spontaneous study based on learning obtained through practice and experience; and (7) to unify the content of education, and reduce the whole life of the pupils, both in and out of school, to the single purpose of training true subjects of the Empire.

Although there were numerous exceptions, especially in private schools, teaching methods in the secondary schools were generally limited to textbooks or lectures followed by individual "recitations" by the pupils. Almost all subjects were considered drill subjects, and the proficiency of Japanese teachers in teaching facts and inculcating stereotyped concepts was very high. Pupil discussion was not encouraged and the use of pupil initiative was frowned upon.

One significant feature of the middle schools was military training, which was an integral and important part of the curriculum. Here the Japanese boy was subjected for the first time to fully organized military training. The War Department provided officer instructors and during the War the training occupied five hours a week. Instruction included squad drill, military evolutions, target practice, bayonet fighting, and the use of hand grenades and other implements of warfare.

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[1] The remainder of this section is taken from Education in the New Japan, published by the Supreme Commander Allied Forces, Civil Information and Education Section, Education Division, Tokyo, 1948, 85 pp.

The secondary school system in Japan, and especially the middle schools, have been under frequent attack in the past. The burden of these attacks on the middle schools has been the charge that the curriculum was designed to prepare students for further study rather than for ordinary problems of life, with the result that the greater proportion of the graduates who could not go on to higher schools were left without adequate training in vocations and other experiences necessary for satisfactory participation in the life of the nation. Another charge has been that the middle schools dominated the elementary school curriculum subverting its normal purposes under the necessity for passing the entrance examinations. This was followed up by the further charge that the middle school curriculum, in turn, was dominated by the necessity of passing the entrance examinations to the higher schools. Critics of the system have, accordingly, proposed that two courses should be offered: one for those who propose to go on to the higher schools and universities, and the other for those who intend to enter a vocation immediately after graduation. The principal difficulty in effecting this proposal has been that pupils usually desired to follow the preparatory curriculum, even when they knew in advance that most of them would not be able to enter higher schools. Since only after the final examination results had been published was the pupil able to tell whether he would be permitted to continue at school, he preferred to give himself every chance available by following the preparatory course.

NATURE OF THE U.S. INTERVENTION IN SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES

In March, 1946, a U.S. Education Mission consisting of 27 representatives of American education, under the chairmanship of Dr. George D. Stoddard, spent a month in Japan. In consultation with the military authorities and a committee of Japanese educators and other representatives of Japan, a guidelines document was prepared and published within a month. It identified a variety of "needs", including that of decentralization of educational decision-making, the adoption of American practices in the schools in order to make them democratic, the abolition of special courses on morals, and the rewriting of Japanese history and geography.

The naivete of the whole approach can be glimpsed in the following extracts from the Stoddard report.[2] The speed with which the report was compiled did not help.

A highly centralized educational system, even if it is not caught in the net of ultranationalism and militarism, is endangered by the evils that accompany an intrenched bureaucracy. Decentralization is necessary in order that teachers may be freed to develop professionally under guidance, without regimentation. They, in turn, may then do their part in the development of free Japanese citizens.

The course in morals as taught in the Japanese schools of late years was aimed at an obedient citizenry. This effort at order through loyalty proved so effective, upborne as it was by all pillars of society, that the means became

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[2] From United States Education Mission Report, published by the 8th U.S. Army, U.S. Army Printing Office, Tokyo, March 1946, 62 pp.

identified with malicious ends. So the course on morals has been suspended. But a democratic system, like any other, requires an ethics to match and to perpetuate its own genius. Its appropriate virtues can be taught, and they should be taught in the schools as elsewhere. As democracy, however, represents a pluralism of values, the means to democratic ends are themselves manifold.

It is in large part because of this cultural variety of free societies that the schools in some lands do not undertake to concentrate into one curricular effort the necessary training in virtues. Where teachers are well prepared, are independent minded, are loyal from love, and have few enough students per teacher to individualize instruction, ethical training tends to take care of itself, informing each pedagogical part with the spirit of the moral whole.

We know that if Japan goes democratic in fact, democratic ethics will get taught. The manner of its teaching we leave to the Japanese, provided only that it be informed of peace and be oriented toward democracy.

History and geography are normally designed to assist the student in orienting himself in time and space. They are expected to provide an objective basis on which the student can develop a historical perspective, an acquaintance with his physical environment, and a sense of the relationship between his own environment and the rest of the world.

The history of Japan has encouraged a different emphasis in teaching both subjects. Its recorded history has been consciously confused with mythology, and its geography protectively and even religiously self-centered.

History and geography courses, having been assigned a place of little importance in the typical Japanese curriculum as objective subjects, have had a major role in political and militaristic indoctrination. Successive revisions of the texts have followed the course of national policy and with great damage, as in the latest revision of 1939.

The responsibility for the compilation of history and geography texts should not rest within the Ministry of Education. Councils of competent Japanese scholars should be established to develop authentic and objective sources for the re-writing of Japanese history. Such materials would provide a basis for the preparation of textbooks, the latter to be undertaken in accordance with principles outlined elsewhere in this report.

The over-all objective should be the promotion of democratic Japanese education within a world society committed to non-aggression and peace.

In order that the above generalizations concerning teaching methods may have a more definite meaning, an illustration will be given showing specific practices that may be employed.

The field chosen for illustration is that which is referred to as ethics and sometimes "civics" in Japan, and is a part of "social studies" in the United States. It embraces political science, economics, sociology, and ethics, adapted to the maturity of the learner.

According to their age level, pupils should learn about local industry and local, prefectural, and national government. In the elementary and secondary schools they will profit from visits to business establishments, banks, stores, police and fire departments, and government offices; they will learn how private and public business is carried on. They should be encouraged to ask questions, express opinions and engage in discussions. Responsibilities of employers and government officials should be dwelt on, and the common rights of individuals as employees and as citizens. Questions should be raised as to the means of safeguarding these rights and ways of improving them. Film strips and motion pictures can supplement the usual methods of instruction to extend the pupil's knowledge beyond the immediate locality.

To vitalize the knowledge so gained, certain class periods could be devoted to problems of the school. A simple type of organization can be set up, with a flexible committee plan to discuss and work out solutions to such problems as improving the appearance of the school, improving health conditions, developing recreational facilities, obtaining exhibits of books or pictures, planning school parties, introducing new pupils to the school, and developing special interest clubs. It might be expected that in some schools elected representatives of each class or group would serve as a student council. This would act within its sphere of power as a governing body of the distinctively student interests, forwarding suggestions or recommendations to the faculty for their consideration.

Democratic processes may be misinterpreted; they need clarification. With the impact of other cultures on the traditional Japanese codes of behaviour, a number of conflicts will undoubtedly arise between different groups and between the younger and older generations. Discussions, led by selected teachers, should help the younger generation to hold to what is good, whether it be old or new.

Besides the experience provided in the regular class period, moral behaviour and ethical attitudes can be developed in other school situations, for example in musical organizations. Choir, band, orchestra and ensemble, when musical instruments are available, in addition to the aesthetic values involved, will enable pupils to combine personal enjoyment with desirable social ends. Similarly, formal or informal dramatic presentations, plays, and marionette shows call upon a variety of talent, each contribution having its respected place.

In addition, group games and team sports provide children with fine opportunities to learn the virtues of sharing, respect for others, and the rules of good sportsmanship under practical and trying situations. If these attitudes can be generalized to apply to other life situations, they are given a meaning and substance not likely to follow from purely didactic methods.

EFFECTS OF THE INTERVENTION

Action followed quickly in the wake of the guidelines. A 150 page Teachers' Guidebook of Civic Education was published within a few months. It was written by Japanese educators in Japanese and submitted to the Occupation authorities

for approval. It was never published in English, but recently it appeared (along with several other documents from the Occupation period) in Japanese in a new resource book.[3]

In the following year, that is 1947, a full scale secondary social studies curriculum was published. It was based on the state curricula of California and Virginia. It emphasized life-centred activities rather than academic content, was designed as a series of units of work - six units for each year with six to ten subdivisions in each unit as was characteristic at that time, and was arranged to fit the three year junior high (called lower secondary in Japan) and three year senior high (upper secondary) system which had already replaced the Chugakko and the other secondary institutions.

The units of these courses (often called The Core Curriculum) were as follows:

1st year Lower Secondary	Unit 1	Lifestyles in Japan
	Unit 2	Family life
	Unit 3	School
	Unit 4	Industrial activities
	Unit 5	Urbanization
	Unit 6	Leisure
2nd year Lower Secondary	Unit 1	Agriculture
	Unit 2	Natural resources
	Unit 3	Industrial history
	Unit 4	Transportation
	Unit 5	Natural disasters
	Unit 6	Community life and government
3rd year Lower Secondary	Unit 1	Cultural heritage
	Unit 2	Artistic needs
	Unit 3	Political life
	Unit 4	Employment opportunities
	Unit 5	Consumerism
	Unit 6	Individuals and community life
1st year Upper Secondary	Unit 1	Free enterprise system
	Unit 2	Role of Government in economic life
	Unit 3	Employer-employee relations
	Unit 4	Problem of poverty
	Unit 5	Democracy in Japan
	Unit 6	Relations between Japan and other nations

In the 2nd and 3rd years of Upper Secondary two courses were to be chosen from the following three:
Asian history
Geography
Western history

To service these courses, eighteen national textbooks were produced in a short time. They were written by a team of educators chosen by the Ministry of Education, then published commercially.

The fact that all this mass of educational material was published only in Japanese is significant. Language competence among the Occupation authorities was generally poor. Even the most senior members of the Civilian administration

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[3] Resource Book of Social Studies, NIER, Tokyo, 1974, 543 pp., 4 vols.

had to rely heavily on interpreters.[4] The result - revolutionary transformations were taking place in the educational system, by edict from the Occupation authorities, but the interpretation and application of these transformations had to be carried out, largely independently, by Japanese educators.

I talked with Dr. Hiroshi Kida, Director of NIER, who had been Deputy Minister of Education in 1947. His experience at that time illustrates the enormous gap that existed between the two language groups. One of his responsibilities was to write a two volume text on democracy, the most sensitive and fundamental aspect of the new measures. This book was to be a key element in the process of transforming the country from a military dictatorship to a democracy like the U.S.

Dr. Kida told me how he assembled the various Japanese experts, wrote the books and had them considered by the U.S. authorities. They were accepted without any changes and published in 1948. The democratization of the country was, at least in this dimension, carried through by the Japanese themselves with no help whatsoever from outside sources.

The two volume 373 page text, covering the following topics, was used in the second and third years of the lower secondary schools.

Volume One: Nature of democracy
Development of democracy
Different systems of democracy
Voting rights
Majority decision-making
The voter
Politics and people
Democracy in social life
Democracy in economic life
Democracy and trade unions
Democracy and dictatorship

Volume Two: History of democracy in Japan
Democracy in the New Constitution
How to learn democracy
New responsibility and rights of Japanese women
Democracy in international affairs
What democracy can do for us.

FEATURES OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL STUDIES

For about a decade the life-centred curriculum dominated textbook writing and teaching practice. Then, in the late fifties, with the country beginning to get on its feet economically and with the Occupation authorities removed, Japanese educators swung back to a modified form of traditional curricula. The reformed structure of the system (outlined below) remained, but the ideas which had been injected into that system by Americans and then translated into

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[4] From personal conversations with Dr. Richard Farnsworth, University of California, former Senior educational administrator, Occupation authorities.

action by Japanese educators now took on a new form. It was a form that more accurately reflected both the nature of the cultural milieu and the changing needs of the country.

The main stream of Japanese education now consists of five types of institutions:

Ages	
-	Post secondary institutions
16 - 18	Upper secondary (Kotogakko)
13 - 15	Lower secondary (Chugakko)
6 - 12	Elementary (Shogakko)
3 - 5	Kindergartens (Yochien)

Typical 1978 social studies curricula for lower and upper secondary are as follows:

Lower secondary	1st year	World geography and Japanese history
	2nd year	Geography of Japan and Japan in relation to world history
	3rd year	Civics (e.g. democracy, economics, international affairs)
	all three years	Moral education (e.g. courage, work ethic, respect for others)
Upper secondary	1st year	Study of modern society (details below)
	2nd and 3rd years	Students choose two of the following five subjects History of Japan World history Geography Ethics Politics and Economics

The Study of Modern Society is far reaching in its break with former curricula. It is divided into two main sections as follows:

I Basic problems of modern society
- nature of society
- environment
- resources
- economics and human welfare
- technology
- modern democracies
- international peace

II Modern society and the individual
- cultural exchange
- Japanese culture
- adolescence
- psychological problems in a modern society
- individuality in society
- search for meaning in life
- ethics

In these contemporary patterns there is a return to long-standing traditions. Moral education, banned by the Occupation authorities, is once again in place as a separate subject. One of its strongest emphases is "loyalty to one's country", a theme that was played down in the reforms of 1946.

Traditionally academic subjects again dominate the curriculum in spite of the presence of new enlightened courses like "Study of Modern Society". The scramble for academic success is as intense as it was in the days of the old Chugakko, except that the focus has shifted a notch higher into the post-secondary domain. Now the competition focuses, not on entry or non-entry into

secondary institutions, but on getting into the six or ten most prestigious universities. To get into one of these (Tokyo University is at the top of the list) is a guarantee of employment in one of the major commercial enterprises, of status in the general community; it is an assurance of being able to marry the "right" girl or boy.

There is now virtually universal provision of education through upper secondary although compulsory education ends with third year lower secondary. Over 90% of those who enrol in elementary schools finish third year upper secondary. Half of this graduating population seek a place in a post-secondary institution and 50% succeed.[5]

One new element in the fierce competition for academic success is the Gakushu-Juku, the night school cramming institutions.[6] Most of the country's lower secondary students spend more than four hours a week in these private schools. In one prefecture there are more of the Gaskushu-Juku type schools than there are regular schools.

Japanese education may seem to have become egalitarian, but the age-old meritorious system, buttressed by ambitious parents, is the harsh reality that students have to face.

CONCLUSIONS AND MAJOR RECOMMENDATION

1. The long-term U.S. influence on Japanese Social Studies is far less than might have been expected. The language barrier, plus the naivete of the imposed curriculum led the Japanese to reject the U.S. contribution as soon as they had the freedom to do so. One harmful effect of these things was the continuing tendency to regard all U.S. Social Studies developments as irrelevant to Japan.

2. The strength of the country's ethnic cohesion means that centralist tendencies operate nationally even in the face of a great deal of ideological differences. There is consensus, for example, on elements of moral education. Freedom can flourish alongside sharply defined and nationally accepted norms of behavior - patriotism, work ethic, respect for the institutions of society, good manners.

3. Canadian education and particularly civic education would benefit enormously if some of the centralist elements of Japanese education were adopted. I am thinking particularly of the elements of national loyalty. Ways and means could be assisted by a closer study of present-day educational processes in Japan, particularly those affecting the development of a curriculum in moral education.

4. The present highly competitive system in Japan is not healthy. Reform of teaching methods and curriculum content are needed, especially in the secondary schools. Since teachers are most affected by how they have been taught and since university entrance is the focus of most of the competition, this reform will be most effective if it comes from the top down. There are many reform models available. An improvement in content and pedagogy in the leading universities could have a profound and lasting influence on secondary teaching styles and university entrance examinations.

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[5] From Isao Amagi, Higher Education in Japan, JSPS, 1977.

[6] See M. Vere De Vault and Koji Kato, "Japan's Second System of Education", Phi Delta Kappan, June 1977, pp 735-736.